

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** Self-Efficacy and Physical Activity in Older Adults

**STUDENT:** Changsu Lee

**DEGREE:** Doctor of Education

**COLLEGE:** Teacher's College

**DATE:** May, 2011

**PAGES:** 104

The Center for Disease Control (2008) and William (2006) reported that the American older population has dramatically increased recently. Numerous studies found that when people get old, they are more likely to have functional disabilities with physical components. Frontera et al. (2000) and Doherty (2003) reported that older adults have significantly decreased muscle force and power. They also have a higher risk of chronic disease, arthritis, type 2-diabetes, obesity, and certain types of cancer compared to young adults (Grembowski et al, 1993; & Wojtek et al, 2009). Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1997 and 1999), and several studies have shown that a strong sense of self-efficacy could maintain regular physical activity and change health behavior to reduce the risk of illness or mortality of older adults (CDC, 1999; & MaAuley et al. 1997).

The current study examined the relationship between self-efficacy for exercise and level of physical activity for older adults. This study also examined the relationship between self-efficacy for exercise and the level of physical activity through various demographic dimensions including age, gender, marital status, years

of completed education, and household income. Participants of the study were 50 years of age and older, who currently live in the Midwest. Two local senior centers and one volunteer group provided the participants. A total of 202 questionnaires were distributed to volunteer participants during the spring and summer of 2010, and 124 were returned.

Data analysis included the use of one-way ANOVA to determine the relationship between the self-efficacy for exercise and the level of physical activity. Multiple Regression determined the relationships between self-efficacy for exercise and the level of physical activity through the demographic variables. Results indicated that the exercise self-efficacy scale positively related with leisure activity group. However, no differences were observed for the exercise self-efficacy scale by habitual and occupational physical activity. The results also indicate that significant correlations were found between age and exercise self-efficacy. Younger adults indicated that moderate and regular physical activity positively affected their exercise self-efficacy.

The findings suggest that young adults who engage in more physical activity attain more favorable exercise self-efficacy than older adults. The conclusions indicate that some differences were observed between the level of physical activity and exercise self-efficacy, and these findings add to our understanding of the physiological and cognitive benefits of physical activity, and its impact on older adults' cognitive perspectives.